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Thesis

THE GOAL OF THE CHRIST

by

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P r e f a c e

Before I finished my college work, I started to work with a group of young people. One of the young ladies who was supposed to be in the group, but who was indifferent toward religion, attempted suicide. It was my duty as well as my privilege to visit her and to talk to her. Not many moments passed before she spoke like this: "What is the church -- nothing but a place for gossip! What does God mean? God is nothing but a myth. And what does Christ mean to anyone -- he was good because he couldn't be anything else. It was no problem for him to live -- where's religion any help to me?"

That one statement concerning Christ: "He was good because he couldn't be anything else", sort of stunned me. Never had a question concerning Christ and his help to mankind been so forcibly put to me, and especially by a person who had been tasting of the bitterness of life. Right then and there without really thinking I made this statement: "Christ was not good because he had to be. He faced disappointment and discouragement. He grew in favor with God and man; he grew into the presence of God, until he was truly God's son. He did not have to -- he chose to."

The young lady replied: "If that is true, then Jesus can mean something to me."

Since that time I have been searching for more proof to sustain the statement I made. In Dr. Lowstuter's class I

Preface (Continued)

have been helped tremendously as I have changed from my literal interpretation of the Bible to a deeper and fuller understanding of it. I have not as yet finished my attempt. This paper in itself is a bringing together of some of the facts and ideas about Jesus thus helping me to be consistent in my beliefs and teaching. I may not be right in all my inferences; I have not closed my mind as yet. I am still searching and seeking for a fuller understanding of Him we call Master.

In this paper biblical quotations are taken from the King James' version.

The Goal of the Christ.

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THE GOAL OF THE CHRIST

The Goal of the Christ.

Introduction

"The advance of mankind has everywhere depended upon the production of men of genius. All progress comes from individuals, and all resistance to progress comes from the mob." (1) Among these men of genius, or exceptional men, we include the great inventors and scientists, the great political thinkers and leaders, the prophets and reformers, the artists and poets, the moralists, philosophers, religious thinkers, and above all, the idealists.

"The exceptional man is a product of his age and is bound up with its life. Moses, Socrates, Jesus, the Caesars, Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, Napoleon, Lincoln, and the others, did not come to their several peoples and times or their several departments of life at random, independently of conditions. Each came "in the fullness of time." Each was the product of a period of social gestation when various movements, ideals and other machinery of life were coming into existence and making the great man. Each was a sort of focusing point of the tendencies of his age along certain lines. Great men seem to sum up in their own personality and activity the striking tendencies of their age, and perform offices which are of consequence to it. They are not arbitrary or contingent existences, but the highly accomplished representatives which every people produce. And yet, while exceptional men are products of their age, inextricably bound up with it, they are singular products of their own mental processes,

(1) Hertzler, J. O., Social Progress, p. 221

each one able to lift himself partially above his age, in his own way and measure an epochmaker, producing a new life not commensurable with the old.

"It is also true that not all ages produce the same quality or quantity of exceptional men. Their production is a matter of the right time and the right conditions. There has doubtless been many an age in the history of a given people when most of those of great potential capacity remained undeveloped, due to lack of need or opportunity. The background must challenge the exceptional man to draw him out of it. The old maxim "great times produce great men" is true to a considerable extent. Times of ferment, of crisis, produce the great thinkers and leaders." (1)

Jesus was a product of his age. The conditions, social, political, and religious, which helped to awaken his potentialities will be illustrated in the next chapter. He was most certainly a unique individual and from the first had a definite consciousness of God. As he grew he came to realize more fully the close relationship between himself and God -- a relationship of father and son. Jesus realized that the conditions of his time were to be met not only by political and social changes but also by a change within man himself, a a change in his attitude and in his impulses.

The exceptional man is stimulated by the conditions of his age. Moses reverted to laws, Socrates to philosophy,

(1) Hertzler, J.O., Social Progress, p. 226

Caesar and Napoleon to wars, but Jesus reverted to revealing God's love to mankind. His work was to make his love for God known in a service to man. The more he attempted to serve mankind the more he was driven to God, and the more intimately he came to know God the more he tried to make his ideals correspond to what he thought were God's ideals and God's will.

The Goal of Jesus then, like that of many another leader, was to save his people, but Jesus' method was not by the sword but by imparting the knowledge of God to his fellowmen through word and deed. The conditions of his age urged him on and his unique character made him capable of leading.

Chapter I

Background of the World into which Jesus Came.

Palestine has been the battlefield of great empires -- Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Yet in spite of the over-running by different nations, it has to an amazingly large extent maintained its individuality. For artistic and intellectual development Europe has acknowledged Greece as its mother, while Rome has been looked to for the arts of law and government; but in the matter of religion, the Jews have been the preservers and donors of it. And it was this strong bond of religion that bound its people together in spite of the molestations of many nations.

Political Condition

It was during the Persian supremacy that the Jews were allowed to return to Palestine after the Babylonian exile. (Not all returned.) For approximately two centuries they lived fairly quietly until Alexander the Great conquered the Persian King at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C. Then, after the death of Alexander the Great, there was constant war between the Northern Greek Kingdom of the Seleucids and the Southern Egyptian Kingdom of the Ptolemies, and Palestine was largely the scene of the warfare. When Palestine passed under the Seleucid Kings, Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) made a determined attempt to annihilate the institutions and ideas of Judaism, and to prohibit its religion and merge it altogether in the world of Hellenism.

But the persecution of Antiochus awoke an heroic and fanatical resistance, the leaders of which were found in the priestly family known popularly as the Maccabees, from Judas Maccabaeus. This was perhaps the most successful nationalistic uprising the world had seen. It succeeded in winning a complete independence for Israel for a period of eighty years (143-63B.C.) The Greek cities in Palestine were destroyed and flourishing regions were turned into a wilderness.

At the beginning of this movement for the redemption of Israel, the Pious (the strict observers of the law of Moses and of God), was the strength and source of the inspiration. But it soon appeared that the Hasmonaean Kings who ruled during (143-63 B.C.) were brutal, selfish, and godless tryants. And so the Pious, later known as the Pharisees, were driven into opposition to their party and there began the long struggle between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The internal struggle between these two parties became intense, so much so that when Jannaeus entered Jerusalem in triumph he had eight hundred, who were no doubt largely Pharisees; crucified. (1)

In 63 B.C. the Roman General Pompey took and occupied Jerusalem. He put an end to the Hasmonaean succession, and the last of these "Kings of the Jews." Pompey did not bring all the Jewish territory immediately under control nor appoint a new king, because he had other matters to attend to. So Judea was left a prey to confusion and strife. Finally, in 37 B.C.

(1) Gore, C., Jesus of Nazareth, p. 22

Herod the Great became the King over the Jews. He was appointed by Rome.

Herod in many ways was a splendid monarch. He erected the new Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem, he abolished the life-long tenure of the high priest-hood and brought a family of the old priestly stock from Egypt, out of which he provided at his will a succession of high priests. Generally he patronized Judaism in Jerusalem, but in the Hellenized cities he patronized paganism. He built fortresses and temples to various gods, and had a strong mercenary army. However, he put to death anyone whom he feared, even to his own family. He died shortly after the birth of Jesus (4 B.C.).

Upon the death of Herod the Jews sent an embassy to Rome asking that they might be brought under the direct government of the Emperor. Their request was not granted immediately. Surviving members of Herod's family were appointed, not as Kings, but as "Tetrachs". Rebellions followed. After nine years Augustus appointed proconsulars over Judea and Samaria (A.D. 6). When the ministry of Jesus began, Pontius Pilate was the fifth proconsul.

Thus at the time of Jesus we find a procurator or proconsul in charge of affairs. He was supported by Roman troops and could assert himself whenever he chose. However, it was not the Roman policy to irritate the Jews nor to interfere with their religion or social life. The Temple, which no one was allowed to enter except a Jew, was controlled by the

"chief priests", and assisted by a temple guard of Levites. The punishing of false teachers, and of the breakers of the Mosiac law, as well as the regularing of both the civil and ecclesiastical observances peculiar to the Jewish nation was the duty of the sacred council called the Sanhedrin . This body could do about anything except execute the death penalty.

In Samaria and Judaea the procurator ruled but in Galilee and Peroea Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, ruled. He maintained his own army and collected his own revenue. Philip also reigned in the northern region. He was well liked and honored by his people.

Social Conditions.

Because of the revolts, civil wars, and oppressions that took place during the last century before Christ, and also because of "earthquakes and famines" (1) and in spite of the building program of the Herods, there must have been much ruin throughout. "And naturally it would follow that there would be disease, especially of nervous and mental disorders. This would make it a natural seed-plot of Messianic visions of extravagant kind." (2)

There is no doubt that the land was haunted by the terror of evil spirits which had power to take possession of human bodies. There is evidence, too, that there was misery among the mass of people as Dr. Klausner points out in the illustration which Jesus used of the story of Dives and Lazarus. Yet we also find Jesus referring to the rich house-

(1) Gore, .C., Jesus of Nazareth, p. 28
(2) Klausner , J., Jesus of Nazareth, p. 227

holders. We find traces of the people being burdened under taxation, but we have no figures or exact information. All we know is that the collection of the taxes was let out and the collectors made all they could out of it. These publicans who collected the taxes were despised by their fellow-countrymen.

Although ruled most of the time by a foreign nation, we find the Jew feeling that he had an almost divine right to freedom. Thus at all times, and especially in Galilee, there was the feeling of rebellion and a ready welcome for any possible Messiah.

Although business and commerce were carried on with the Greeks, the Jews held themselves aloof from them.

Religious Situation.

Among the Jews there were several religious sects, the primary ones being the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes.

The Pharisees, whose origin has been stated, formed the most important class and was held in the greatest respect. Most of the Scribes and authorized expounders of the law, belonged to the Pharisaic party. The basis of their religion was the scriptures, and especially the Mosaic law. Their ambition was to carry out the letter of the law, and so when the common people neglected to observe the law entirely they were held in contempt. The religion of the Pharisees might well be labeled

as a formalistic and legalistic religion.

Although the Pharisees observed the feasts, offered sacrifice, and used the Temple for private prayer, their religion was not a religion of the Temple but rather of the Synagogue. That is, they paid more attention to the law which concerned the Sabbath and their social and domestic life.

The Pharisees also placed a special value on books known as apocalyptic. They believed strongly in angels and the resurredtion.

And, furthermore, they detested the domination of the pagans and foreigners over Israel. So they came to believe more firmly in their deliverance by the promised Messiah. Yet because of bitter experience they tolerated subjection, so as to do nothing which the Romans might think was rebellious, waiting until the intervention of Heaven would free them. (1) (2)

The opponents of the Pharisees were the Sadducees. The Sadducees might be classed as the richer class of people who were good-living but not rigorous in their religious observances. From the Sadducees came the priests who had charge of the Temple and its sacrifices. They resolved in every way to keep on good terms with their Roman over-lords. They regarded the very mention of a Messiah as King of the Jews with horror for fear of alarming the Romans. And if we look closely we find it was they quite as much as the Pharisees who were responsible for the condemnation of Jesus and for his execution. Neither their repudiation of the Messianic hope nor the Pharisaic acquiescence in keeping it in abeyance satisfied the people. The peoples' hearts were full of

(1) C. Gore, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 51
(2) J. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 212

resentment against foreign rule, and they were looking for a deliverer. (1)

In Judaea at this time there was a sect called the Essenes. This was a group of ascetic, quasi-monastic people. They had an inner circle of celibate devotees and an outer circle of adherents. They ascribed much to constant washing and bound themselves with secret doctrines. Some lived on a communal scale. They refrained from animal sacrifice and animal food. Some have tried to associate John the Baptist with the Essenes. (2)

With the political, social, and religious conditions as they were, nothing of particular importance happened until about 26 A.D. when we hear of John the Baptist preaching, "Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (3) He was doing what the prophets of old had done, except that he added this -- he was preparing the people for their Messiah. People from great distances came to hear him, and his disciples became a recognized sect which he taught to fast and pray. John is called the "Forerunner."

(1) C. Gore, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 33
J. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 216
(2) J. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 218
(3) Matthew 3:2

Chapter II

The Jewish Hope of a Messiah.

The general tendency of the Old Testament history and thought had been to stimulate certain expectations of a future condition which had their central thought in the person of the Messiah. At the beginning of the Christian era these hopes had assumed two different forms: (1) National hope, and (2) Apocalyptic hope.

The national hope has "the son of David" as the central figure of the Messianic Kingdom. "This implies a national restoration of Israel; its sphere is this earth purified with Palestine, Jerusalem, and Zion as its center; and its subjects are the Jews in contrast with the Gentiles." (1)

One of the best illustrations of literature revealing this nationalistic hope is found in the Psalms of Solomon:

> "Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, in the time which thou, O God, knowest, that he may reign over Israel thy servant;
>
> And gird him with strength that he may break in pieces them that rule unjustly.
>
> Purge Jerusalem from the heathen that trample her down to destroy her, with wisdom and with righteousness.
>
> He shall thrust out the sinners from the inheritance, utterly destroy the proud spirit of the sinners, and as potter's vessels with a rod of iron shall he break in pieces all their substance.
>
> He shall destroy the ungodly nations with the word of his mouth, so that at his rebuke the nations may flee before him, and he shall convict the sinners in the thoughts of their hearts.
>
> And he shall gather together a holy people, whom he shall lead in righteousness; and shall judge the tribes of the people that hath been sanctified by the Lord his God.
>
> And he shall not suffer iniquity to lodge in their midst; and none that knoweth wickedness shall dwell with them.

(1) Peritz, I.J., Old Testament History, p. 350

For he shall take knowledge of them, that they be all the sons of their God, and shall divide them upon the earth according to their tribes.

And the sojourner and the stranger shall dwell with them no more.

He shall judge the nations and the peoples with the wisdom of his righteousness." (1)

"The Apocalyptic hope has 'the Son of man coming on the clouds of Heaven', conceived as a heavenly being." (2) In the place of a national Israel there is to appear a universal mankind; instead of Palestine and an earthly kingdom we have a heavenly world. That is, the old world will pass away and a new one will be made; it is in fact a general judgment, prepared for by the resurrection of the dead. The righteous are to enjoy the eternal bliss while the wicked are to inherit eternal damnation. This conception we find in the Books of Daniel (3) and Enoch (4).

These two hopes were not separated entirely. Often they are found blended together. Without a doubt the former idea was most prevalent at the time of Jesus.

Josephus as quoted by Simkhovitch, says John the Baptist was put to death for purely political reasons. "What did John the Baptist do? He announced the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah in the general and universal understanding of the time, was to be the deliverer of the Jews from Roman oppression. Herod, who had received his appointment as Tetrach of Galilee from Rome, was but an administrative instrument of his Roman sovereign. To him the coming of Christ couldmean

(1) Peritz, I. J., Old Testament History, p. 330
(2) Ibid, p. 330
(3) Daniel, 12:1-3
(4) Enoch 46:1-6; 47:5FF

nothing but rebellion against Rome, under a leadership which the people would acclaim as divine. Whatever may have been the flavor of John's religious and moral preachings, to Herod he was but the herald of a revolution, with greatmoral power over the people, who came to him in multitudes. Since the fate of the Herodians was tied up with the power of Rome, Herod put the precursor of what looked to him like the coming revolution, to death.

To the Jewish populace, the Christ was the deliverer who was to come to deliver them from foreign rule and oppression. To a Herod, or any Roman administrative agent, the Christ who was to come was the leader of the expected rebellion. For what looked to the so-called Jewish Patriot like deliverance, of course meant rebellion to the forces of Rome." (1)

This reason for the death of John the Baptist is not the reason given in the New Testament. In Matthew we find that John was laid hold on for the sake of Herodias. And then to please Herodias on her birthday, Herod had John beheaded. (2)

Whether or not there might have been an element of both causes, political and to please Herodias, we cannot say. But the very fact that Josephus mentions the political side, indicates that the expectation of the coming Messiah must have been taken into cognizance by both the people and the rulers.

Let us say then, for the time being, that John the Baptist was put to death by Herod for announcing the coming of the Christ. How was it that when Pontius Pilate sent Christ to

(1) V. G. Simkhovitch, Toward the Understanding of Jesus, p. 28
(2) Matthew 14, 1-11

Herod, Herod did not put him to death but sent him back to Pilate? Neither Herod nor Pilate found fault in him. And furthermore, the Jews who were praying so fervently for the coming of the Christ, sought Pilate to see to the execution of Jesus. Then, since this is the case, there certainly was a wide difference between the expected Messiah of popular prophecy and Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus' own conception of the Messiah will be taken up in one of the later passages.

There is one thing we must remember and that is that the Jewish belief in a militaristic Messiah was most certainly prevalent, so much so that even the rulers feared the outcome of a Messiah with so much authority and such a large following.

This Messiah that was to come was to be of the seed of David, but as to the date of the arrival of the Messiah there was nothing definite. The prophets prophesied this King and Kingdom to be in the immediate future. Yet in spite of the constant failure of the Kingdom to arrive the spirits of the people never seemed broken, for as long as God was God this event must take place.

Therefore, the Jewish people looked for a political Messiah who would free them from the bondage of foreigners, and who would set up a militaristic kingdom with Jerusalem as the center.

Chapter III

Jesus' Conception of Himself.

If Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, did he know he was? And if he knew, when did he realize the fact? To answer these questions in anything less than a large book is almost impossible, therefore, the necessity for a very much condensed statement. It seems logical to ask, What did Jesus think of himself? or at least, What did Jesus reveal about himself at different stages of his life?

Childhood

Very little is known about the childhood of Jesus although it is quite certain that he had at least four brothers, James, Jose, Judah, Simeon, and at least two sisters. (1) The father Joseph was a carpenter who is thought to have died during Jesus' youth. Not likely the family had any too much to live on, but had the average means of the day.

There in the little town of Nazareth, hidden away in the Galilaean hills, he grew up. During Jesus' earlier years, soon after the outbreaks which followed the death of Herod, and about the time of the Census of Quirinius, the whole of Galilee was a boiling cauldron of rebels, malcontents, and ardent 'seekers after God.' The worst storms may not have reached the little town of Nazareth, but echoes of them were constantly heard. Heavy taxation had made life hard, and disease and destitution, widowed and bereaved women, orphaned

(1) Mark 6:3

children, and forsaken field -- all these abounded in consequence of wars and rebellions. The majority groaned in silence under the heavy burden. They had but one hope: yet a little while and the 'day of consolation' (whether in political, economic or spiritual sense) would come; the Messianic age would draw near and King-Messiah would appear in all the might of his sovereignty and moral grandeur and make an end of all sorrows and pains, all servitude and ungodliness. Jesus, who was one of the people and lived among them, knew their distress and believed too in the prophetic promises and consolations, certainly meditated much on present conditions, and his imagination pictured for him in glowing colours the redemption, both political and spiritual." (1)

Besides this environmental training, Jesus was certainly taught in the Law and the Prophets. Undoubtedly he was taught at home, as was the custom, and also taught in the Synagogue. His later life testifies to a thorough knowledge of these teachings. News from the outside world was brought to the little town by the travelers, as Nazareth was on the land route to the East.

The only thing definite that we hear during his childhood is the incident of his getting lost in the Temple. (2) He was a lad of twelve years then. Here we read of his being found with the doctors. And when his mother asked him what he wasdoing he answered, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (3)

(1) J. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 237
(2) Luke 2, 41-52
(3) Luke 2:49

This passage has been taken to refer to Jesus already realizing that he was destined to be the Messiah. But this hardly seems possible. He was a religious boy, and he had been steeped in the political and religious dreams or hopes of his country. Why should he not ask questions and be interested? Do not children today ask strange and difficult questions?

The only possible exception that could be stated concerning his knowledge of his mission in the world would be -- Did he know anything about his supernatural birth? Had his mother said anything to him? Not likely she had, for not once does Jesus ever mention that his birth was supernatural.

Out of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament only two mention Jesus' supernatural birth. These two (Matthew and Luke) also speak of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph and as having brothers and sisters. In Matthew's account the angels appear unto Joseph while Luke has the angels appear unto Mary. Then Luke has the announcement of the child's birth made to the shepherds while Matthew has a star appear unto the wisemen. However, both accounts are alike in tracing the ancestry back to David through Joseph. Matthew in quoting Isaiah 7:14, misuses the prophecy, for Isaiah's use of the term virgin means any young woman married or unmarried.

If the Messiah was to be of the direct line of David, where would be the relationship if Joseph was not the father of Jesus? Why trace Joseph's ancestry back to David if Jesus was not his son?

"Jesus' father was Joseph and his mother Mary. Such is the explicit statement in an old Syriac manuscript of the Gospels found in the Monastery of Mount Sinai by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson. It is there written (Matthew 1:16), 'And Joseph to whom was espoused the virgin Mary, begot Jesus who was called the Messiah.'

The accounts in Matthew and Luke about the birth of Jesus by the Holy Spirit are lacking in Mark; they stand on the same footing as the stories of Olsus' Jew and of the Tol'doth Yeshu and the Talmud, which regard Jesus as illegitimate and the son of Pandera or Panters, and both alike came into existence only after Christian dogma had determined that not only was Jesus the Messiah but also the Son of God. So long as Jesus was regarded only as the Messiah it wasnecessary to show that his father Joseph was of the stock of Jesse; but as Son of God it was not possible for him to have a human father: therefore, he was born of the Holy Spirit by whom his mother conceived in a fashion incomprehensible to mortal beings. This became a matter of dispute among the earliest Christian sects. And the Jews, who also lacked the critical faculty and the historic sense (but remained strictly monotheistic) confirmed the fact that Jesus had not a legitimate father, but, instead of the Holy Spirit, introduced into their legends the notion of an illicit union. The truth is that Jesus was as legitimate as any other Jewish child in Galilee, where strict supervision was exercised over espoused maidens." (1)

(1) J. Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 232

If the people knew anything about Jesus' miraculous birth, they said nothing. And if Jesus had been of illegitimate birth they naturally would have thrown that up to him. Nothing at least is said about a supernatural birth until after 70 A.D. and then it is only mentioned by Matthew and Luke. The early New Testament church never required a belief in the "Virgin Birth", as a test of whether or not one was eligible for admission.

It seems logical to say that up to and through Jesus' visit to the Temple, where he was found asking questions, he did not consider himself different from any other boy, although Holtzman believes that even at the age of twelve Jesus had a preconception which must also have been known to his parents. (1) If this be so, why did Mary seem so amazed when she found him talking to the doctors? (2) It might be better to say that Mary had high hopes for her son, and it may quite safely be said that he did have, for a young lad, a deep reverence for God and a love for his nation. But this reverence and love seemed natural to him. Through the guidance of his mother and the rabbis, and through the environmental elements of history and political and religious conditions, his ideals were being formed which at a later date would guide his actions.

At the time of his baptism.

For eighteen years we do not hear of anything concerning Jesus except Luke's words, "He advanced in stature, and wisdom, and in favor with God and Man." (3) From these words

(1) O. Holtzman, The Life of Jesus, p. 100
(2) Luke 2:48
(3) Luke 2:52

we can surmise that Jesus grew, not only physically, but socially, mentally, and spiritually. It was during this time that his father must have died, and whereas he was the oldest in the family, the responsibility of caring and providing for the younger ones fell for the most part upon him.

Without a doubt he spent some time in climbing the hills round about and living with nature for, we find him later on speaking often in terms of the out-of-doors -- "the lilies of the field"(1), and the parables of the sower, the fig-tree, the mustard tree, the wheat and the tares and the vineyards.

Besides these hills there were historical places in his neighborhood. There was the hill of Moreh, the battle-field of Gideon, and the mountains of Gilboa, where King Saul was slain. And there were Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel. On the northern horizon there loomed up the peaks of Hermon and Lebanon. Such a setting for a young man who was interested in his nation! Right there much history had been written in human lives. Could this young dreamer have ever imagined that he like Elijah would overthrow Baal? (2) Might not he start to dream of what he'd like to do, since he saw a need for someone to save his nation?

John the Baptist appears preaching, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (3) John was preaching in the Wilderness near the Jordan river, and many people were going out to hear him.

According to Luke 1:36, Mary, the mother of Jesus,

(1) Matthew 6:28-29
(2) Kings 18:30-40
(3) Matthew 3:2

and Elizabeth, the mother of John, were cousins. Yet most authorities feel that John and Jesus did not see each other before the time of the baptism.

As word spread around of the preaching of John, and as many went to hear him, Jesus likewise decided to go. Nestle as quoted by Holtzman says that Jesus was requested by his mother and brothers to go to hear John. (1) It would not take much persuasion for a young man, religiously inclined, to go to hear the great preacher who was prophesying that the Kingdom was at hand. How long Jesus stayed before he was baptized we do not know. Neither do we know how many talks Jesus had with John. Finally one day Jesus came forward and asked to be baptized. If John recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he did not say anything to the multitude. There is no doubt that when John talked with Jesus he realized that he was talking with a man the like of whom he had never talked with before. And so Jesus was baptised; but why? If he was the Messiah, what was the need of baptism? He might have been baptised:

"1. To honor his cousin John.

2. Because he wanted to receive from John the title for his Messiahship.

3. Because he wanted to give a sign that he was done with home life and about to enter public life.

4. To consecrate himself to his work.

5. Because he thought it was his Father's will.

6. For the reason that everyone was baptised, namely to bring himself into the right relation to the Kingdom program." (2)

(1) Holtzman, O., The Life of Jesus, p. 81
(2) Dr. Lowstuter, Class Lectures

Dr. Lowstuter believes that the sixth reason why he might have been baptised was the real reason. If Jesus was sinless, why should he submit to a sin baptism?

Jesus listened to John's preaching and felt that he must make a personal answer to the challenge of John's message. Jesus had always tried to serve God and to do the will of God, and here was an opportunity to pledge his love to God and himself to the "kingdom program." So he was baptised. And for the same reason that everyone was baptised -- as a symbol of his love for God and a determination to serve Him in the Kingdom.

Bishop McConnell says, "Little as the critics may think that we know about him (Jesus), what we do know makes us certain that he accomplished the twofold miracle of utter love of God and complete service to man." (1) Right here at the baptism Jesus is pledging his love and devotion to God, and later on we shall see him making his love for God known in a service to man.

And it was John's message that awoke the slumbering possibilities within him.

Concerning the "heavens opening" and the "descending of the dove" (2) -- Who heard the voice and who saw the dove? There is no doubt that Jesus was in prayer during the baptism, and Jesus' religious experience must be understood through this medium of prayer. The vision did not produce the inner experience, but rather, the inner experience produced the vision.

(1) McConnell, J.F., Public Opinion and Theology, p. 237
(2) Matthew 3:16,17

If we are to take the vision and the voice literally, what would have taken place? In the minds of the people standing round about was the question, Where is the King? Where is the Messiah? And if some one person had been pointed out, would not the people have rushed forth and acclaimed him? The baptism was a high moment in the life of Jesus, for now he had taken a step forward in his stand for "the kingdom."

It does not seem that Jesus even yet had a definite realization of his Messiahship, although some of the best authorities state that this was his acceptance of it.

At the time of His Temptations.

If the baptism of Jesus was an acceptance of his Messiahship, why need the temptations follow? (1) In the baptism Jesus had taken a stand on the side of the Kingdom. But that was not all; he had many questions to settle. What about his mother? Should he leave home? If he should go into this work of the building of the Kingdom, how should he go about it? Jesus was a man who thought things through, and in his wilderness experience there was a period of deep thinking. Rather than being led out into the wilderness to be tempted, he went out there alone to be with God and to decide what he should do and how he should go about it.

Even though it is speculation, Dr. Lowstuter would say that probably the wilderness experience is the time when Jesus worked out his thoughts of Messiahship. Perhaps as he wondered what he could do about the state of affairs

(1) Matthew 4:1-11

of his nation, he thought, "I, even I, might be the man that shall save my people."

However, this is not saying that he considered himself the Messiah in the Jewish conception of the term. He was certainly in the wilderness, but when he emerged from that state of mind he had clear and definite decisions and plans to work by.

Let us look at the temptations of Jesus in the light of what has been said, and see if the temptations themselves do not bear out the facts. The first temptation is that of making stones into bread. If Jesus was in the wilderness forty days were there not other physical needs which required attention as well as hunger? Was he really in the wilderness forty days, or are we to take into consideration that "Jewish like Arabic arithmetic was not at all mathematical, and 'forty' does not mean anything much more definite than 'many'?" (1)

Did he have the power to turn the stones into loaves? Perhaps he thought he did. But the question was how far could he go if he started as a Messiah by turning stones into bread? If he began to work miracles at the start, then the people would expect him to continue. He could become a popular Messiah by giving out food; that type of a Messiah would be desired by many people. Jesus really had difficulty along this line, for later on we see him curing a person -- and then the crowds follow him seeking to be cured. Jesus did not want the people to follow him because of physical cure alone.

(1) C. Gore, Jesus of Nazareth, page 46

No doubt that temptation to go out and build a kingdom where there would be no hunger nor poverty was strong. He had seen the hungry and the poor and had a sympathetic interest in them. But after all, what kind of a kingdom would it be where people were merely satisfied physically? Still there would be the problems of unselfishness, friendliness, and love. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of his mouth." (1) The world needed more than bread, it needed a people with a character like unto God.

The second temptation that came to Jesus was that of casting himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Malachi had prophesied, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." (2) Possibly this prophecy helped to make the temptation stronger. For the people were looking for a Messiah, one who would suddenly come -- should Jesus try to satisfy the peoples' expectations? Should he try to be the Messiah of prophecy? Should he attempt the spectacular? What if it were possible for Jesus to jump from the temple spire -- would it have proved anything? It would have proved nothing except that he was a "temple jumping" Messiah. (3) And what relation would there be between that ability and character? There is no doubt that if one had the ability to jump from the temple spire it would attract attention and attract the crowd, but it would only attract them momentarily and give them no permanent value.

Later on when Jesus was in the midst of his ministry the people asked for a sign, but he refused to give them one.

(1) Matthew 4:4
(2) Malachi, 3:1
(3) Dr. Lowstuter, Class Lectures

Prophets had given signs but these had not been convincing. (1) So Jesus refused to give signs; instead he gave his life as an example.

There is no doubt that here in the midst of his temptation Jesus was realizing that the people would desire the spectacular, and the temptation was whether he should satisfy the peoples' wishes or God's. Developing and revealing a God-like character was to be his ministry rather than a ministry of miracles. It was not so much the question of whether he could get power, for it is not so difficult to attain power as it is to know how to use it. (2) And that temptation was nothing less than Jesus fighting out within himself the battle of whether he should satisfy the people or conform to God's will in the character of his work.

The third temptation: "The devil taketh Him up unto an exceeding high mountain and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said unto Him, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." (3)

The world did not belong to God and Jesus evidently knew it. This kingdom of God had not come on earth as yet. Jesus realized that God ought to have the world and that it was the Messiah's business to get the world for God. Andhere in the third temptation there came this problem of how he should go about getting the world. He could let the world have its own way, or at least let the world think it was having its own way, and it would be easier to handle.

(1) Jonah 1:14
(2) Dr. Lowstuter, Class Lectures
(3) Matthew 4:8,9

But Jesus' ideals were too high and would not let him go about it in this manner. It was the temptation of compromising, of "being practical." Suggestions came to him as to how he might go about and preach, but when he analyzed the situation he decided that to use such methods would be going into partnership with the devil instead of with God. And Jesus' partnership was to be with God.

At the time of his baptism he had taken his stand for the ideals for which the "Kingdom" stood. Now he was wondering whether the ideals were too high, perhaps he was thinking, "If I go half way with some of these ideals I can get further in life. Shall I compromise?" Then the manhood of the man surged forward in the midst of the strife with the determination that his life had been pledged to God, and he would follow what he thought were the ideals of God through to the finish. If this was to be God's world it must be God's work that he should do.

From this time on we see that Jesus tried always to reveal the character of God in all his works. Undoubtedly he did the same prior to his baptismal experience, but because of lack of information we can not prove it, except to say that what a man does in a time of crisis is largely determined by the way he has lived or acted before. We know that Jesus tried to make his life correspond to the character and will of God after his baptism, and we are justified in saying that he did so before his baptism, in so far as he was able.

The results of these temptations were that he decided to be the kind of a Messiah with a character and ideals that

would harmonize with the character of God, and the entire life of Jesus can be interpreted from this point of view. And secondly, the Kingdom must also correspond to the character of God. Let us, however, remember that these temptations were not the only temptations that Jesus had.

Then at this period of his life it can be said that a consciousness of his place in the building of the Kingdom is being realized by him.

His Revelation to His Disciples.

There was evidently some doubt in the minds of the people and the Jewish rulers as to who Jesus was. Even John the Baptist shortly before his death wondered whether Jesus was the Christ. The fact that John wondered indicates that John was not certain at the time of his baptism of Jesus. "Now when John had heard in the prison of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them: Go and shew John again the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (1) It is very apparent that Jesus did not answer outright. If he was the Messiah, it all depended on John the Baptist's conception of what the Messiah was able to do, and that is not told here.

Some time later we find Jesus avoiding the large cities because the people followed him seeking for physical cures and for signs. As he wandered about in the villages near Caesarea

(1) Matthew 11: 1-5

Philippi with his disciples, he stopped and asked them, "Who do men say that I the son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.....Then charged he his disciples that they tell no man that he was the Christ." (1)

Whether Jesus drew this from Peter for the first time or whether before he had inferred to Peter that he was the Christ, cannot be decided. Anyway, this is the first out and out statement by any of the disciples in reference to Jesus' Messiahship. What Peter's conception of the Messiahship seems to be is indicated shortly after his statement that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus becomes intimate with his disciples, feeling, we would say, that the disciples are beginning to understand him. He tells them that he will suffer many things. Peter immediately speaks up with his usual quickness, saying, "Be it far from thee Lord: this shall not be unto thee." (2) If Peter believed Jesus to be the Messiah, he without a doubt thought of Jesus then in terms of the popularly conceived Jewish Messiah. Therefore, Peter could have inferred in this statement that nothing could happen to Jesus, for the Messiah was too powerful to be harmed by human beings.

Furthermore, Jesus tells his disciples to say nothing to anyone concerning Peter's statement. Here again we are lost

(1) Matthew 16:14,15,16,20
(2) Matthew 16:22b

as to the true meaning of Jesus' words. Did he mean to correct this idea of Peter, or did he merely want the disciples to keep quiet until some later date when it would be more appropriate to issue this news to the world. Although there seems to be no definite conclusion as to which idea is correct, the former idea seems to the writer of this paper most likely to be correct.

The Meaning of the Transfiguration to Jesus.

From the time of Peter's confession, Jesus is seen to be facing more keenly the struggle concerning what he has yet to face. Jesus is realizing that if he continues to follow the course he has chosen he will certainly have to suffer. No doubt there is a temptation to turn back and save himself from possible destruction. Even though the temptation may be strong, he still continues to work in the building of the Kingdom.

About a week after Peter's confession, Jesus took with him three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, and went to a nearby mountain top to pray. (Possibly either Mt. Tabor or Mt. Hermon.) This may have been a common practice. While there on the mountain an event took place.

> "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.
> And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.
> And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:
> Who appeared in glory, and spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.
> But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that were with him.

> And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.
> While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.
> And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.
> And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen." (1)

F. H. Hedge says, "The Transfiguration of Christ is to be regarded rather as an event in the lives of the disciples who witnessed it, than an event in the life of the Saviour himself. It was an effect produced on their minds, and not anything which affected his condition. He needed no such outward sign to assure him of that divine nature, to which his own consciousness bore unceasing testimony far stronger than any outward sign could supply." (2)

This would seem then, that the Transfiguration took place to inform the disciples for certain that Jesus was the Messiah. Yet according to Luke the disciples went to sleep. Now if the object of this event was to strengthen the belief of the disciples in the Messiahship of Jesus, why then did the Revealer of the vision let the disciples sleep? Why were they not awake to see and to hear everything that took place?

This event may be interpreted in several ways:

1. As literal. If this is to be taken literally, where do we get the facts? It wasn't like Jesus to give demonstrations like this. And of what benefit was it to the men -- did they get anything out of it?

(1) Luke 9:28-36
(2) W. H. Furness, Jesus and His Biographers, p1 315

2. As a dream. If this was a dream, how was it that they all dreamed alike? Do three or four usually have the same dream?

3. As a vision. The wonder ceases to be Jesus and tends to be a psychological problem. How could they all have the same vision? Do not men at different angles see things differently?

4. As a post-resurrection tradition that got mixed up in its place. This might be, but it is certainly different from any of the other post-resurrection experiences and does not fit in exactly with the other post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

5. Commonly interpreted for the benefit of the disciples.

Dr. Lowstuter in explaining more definitely this last theory gives the following idea: What really happened on the mountain top that evening should be interpreted in the light of Jesus. These days are hard days for Jesus and he is doing much serious thinking. What should he do in regard to what lies ahead of him? There has been a suggestion that he may be put to death. Jesus took these three disciples, Peter, James, and John out with him to pray (according to Luke). Naturally, for what would they pray, or better, for whom would they pray? There is no doubt but that Jesus is seeking light in regard to his own problems, and they may have been praying about his plans. It is not likely that Jesus knew exactly each step that lay ahead of him. He needed heavenly guidance. That is probably what

he was doing there -- seeking guidance. After a time apparently the disciples got tired and went to sleep, but Jesus continued to pray. And as he prayed he thought of some of the Old Testament prophets and what they had endured in order to do the will of God. So intently did he meditate that it seemed as if Moses and Elias were there talking to him and encouraging him to continue the work he had set out to do.

In the story of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane there is another illustration of Jesus praying for guidance, for strength, and for courage, and his disciples sleeping while he is "sweating drops of blood."

It seems possible that when the disciples or Jesus described this experience on the mountain top, that he or they personalized it and said he was talking to Moses and Elias about death. Moses and Elias told him that God might let him die, for they themselves had had a difficult time also.

And then there comes to him a great revelation --he was God's own though he might be asked to die. And this realization caused his features to change and his "face did shine." Toward morning the disciples awakened and could see by the look on Jesus' face that he had triumphed. He replied to their questioning that he had been talking with Moses and Elias, that is, consulting his Old Testament. Perhaps a cloud was passing over at that time, and in later days when the disciples were telling the story in their own words and from their own point of view, they shared in it. They did not actually share in Jesus' revela-

tion. The big factor of it all was a great experience for Jesus.

At the baptism Jesus had seen the kind of a kingdom and man God wanted. Here in the transfiguration he recognizes within himself that as a leader in the building of this kingdom he may become a suffering Messiah. If we wish we may call this the recognition of his suffering Messiahship.

Jesus' Own Reason for the Crucifixion.

The New Testament does not say that Jesus died on the cross because he was the Messiah, and being the Messiah had to die. Jesus himself does not make this statement. Perhaps if we want to read back into some of the Old Testament prophecies, we might be able to make that connotation, but nowhere do we find a statement like this: "I am the Messiah, therefore I must die." The nearest we get to Jesus' saying to the people at large that he was the Messiah, is when he is brought to trial before Pilate and Pilate asks him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and Jesus replies, "Thou sayest." But Pilate did not seem to feel that Jesus indicated that he was the Messiah in that statement, for right after that Pilate turns to the high priest and to the crowd and says: "I find no fault in this man." (1)

Jesus' actions spoke louder than his words. His entire life was a life of sacrifice, living in behalf of others. And as he lived he died, for others. This very fact, whether he said so or not, would make him worthy of being the Christ, the chosen one of God.

(1) Luke 23:4

Jesus' own reason for his crucifixion could be nothing else than that he tried to live according to the ideals of God in a world of greed and strife. It was envy,(1) avarice (2), slander (3), and servility (4) that crucified Jesus. Yet in spite of the sins of the men who crucified Jesus, Jesus' determination to continue steadfast to the end was the final cause for his early death. "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (5)

(1) Mark 15:10
(2) Matthew 26:14-16
(3) Luke 23: 1,2
(4) Mark 15:15
(5) Matthew 26:42

Chapter IV

Jesus' Humanitarian Attitude

Throughout Jesus' entire life we find him prone to satisfy the human necessities of life. He felt the hunger of the poor, the cold of the naked, the pain of the sick, and the sorrow of the afflicted. From his boyhood he had heard the cry of depression and of how the national spirit of the Jewish people cried out to be freed from the Roman rule. It might seem that when Jesus considered linking himself up with the kingdom idea that he thought first of all of the Jewish conception of the kingdom and of the satisfaction of the physical needs.

The reason that makes this so realistic is that one of the three great temptations or problems that Jesus had to wrestle with, immediately following his choosing to take the stand for the kingdom, was the problem of whether he should go out and satisfy the physical side of life instead of the spiritual. That temptation to make the stones into loaves was the temptation to satisfy physical needs in life. And how necessary was the need of satisfying the physical side. For what person could Jesus talk to about accepting the Kingdom of Heaven, what man could Jesus go to to tell of the heavenly father's love, and not think that the man had need of food? Practically the first thing after the raising of Jairus' daughter that Jesus said was, "that something should be given her to eat." (1)

Jesus saw the need of satisfying the physical wants. It does not seem that he laid down any 'cut and dried' rule

(1) Mark 5:43

as he gave directions to his disciples that they should not minister to the physical needs, for did he not say, "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water" (1). And there is another example in the parable of the separation of the sheep and the goats as he tells the righteous to sit on one hand and the unrighteous on the other. Then he begins to show them that one group had won their place in Heaven through their merciful deeds of satisfying physical needs, and the others had lost their place in Heaven because they had not satisfied the physical needs of humanity. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethern, ye have done it unto me." (2)

Then one time Jesus had been preaching to the multitude and it was near eventide. Jesus felt for them that they would be hungry, and he called together his disciples, especially turning to Philip, the man who had the mind to figure almost immediately, and said to them, "Whence shall we buy bread that these might eat"?(3) And then followed that story of the feeding of the five thousand when a little lad set the example by giving his fish and his loaf.

Did Jesus at any time refuse to heal the sick? We have to say this, that he took round about ways to avoid the multitudes who were coming to him to be healed only. For Jesus was not a healer alone. His primary work was teaching, and he felt that he must major in the thing that he could do best, and that was teaching. He brought comfort to the sorrow-

(1) Matthew 10:42
(2) Matthew 25:40
(3) John 6:5

ing. When he went to Mary and Martha and found that their brother had died, he sorrowed with them. He rejoiced with those who were happy, as when he went to the wedding in Canaan.

But Jesus went one step further than merely satisfying human needs. For instance, one day in the press of the crowd Jesus felt the touch of someone, and he turned about and asked who it was who had touched him. After a little hesitation, a woman replied that she had touched him in order that she might be healed, and Jesus turned to her and said, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; Go in peace." (1)

This seems to be a typical illustration of Jesus' attitude -- when he healed the sick or when he satisfied human needs, he added a spiritual blessing, such as, "Go in peace." The human needs alone were not enough to satisfy. However, he did practice and teach that physical needs must be taken into consideration and must be met with. Jesus might have been the greatest social worker the world has ever known, but yet God's Kingdom could not have been brought about by that means alone. A man who had the love of God in him would not see his neighbor go hungry. Yet to satisfy a man's appetite was not the only aim in Jesus' work. A man must have food, but far more important than food is the knowledge of God's fatherly love.

(1) Luke 8:48

Chapter V

Terms Applied to Jesus

Throughout the New Testament we find that many different titles are given to Jesus. Because of this fact it might be well for us to look at and briefly define some of them. Such terms as "rabbi" and "master" need no discussion.

Son of God.

The term "son" would have served very well to express for Jesus his feeling of new status as the chosen spokesman of God. But it is not probable that such terminology, if used, would have had a messianic connotation either for himself or his immediate associates. All Israelites were familiarly known as "sons of God", while an especially devout or favored individual, like a wise man or a king, was specifically a "son". Not until the end of the first century A.D., and then only in one of the apocalyptic books, does the expression "son" appear as the synonym for Messiah.

The epithet implied exceptional equipment forduty or special commission for service, but does not imply that Jesus was the Messiah. However, we cannot say that term did not infer messiahship.

Son of David

The people looked for a leader who would re-establish the Davidic dynasty which had seemed to end centuries before. However, it was felt that God did not intend this dynasty to become extinct. Here and there, there still lived people who could trace their lineage back to David. Therefore, it was

felt that there might be some one among these descendants who might inherit the ancient king's military genius and devotion to Jehovah, and through God's help might rise up and be the leader of the Jewish people. In the Psalm of Solomon, sometimes called the Psalms of the Pharisees (a collection of eighteen psalms written some fifty years before the birth of Jesus) we find that expectation that God would raise up a son of David who would free his people from foreign rule.

Jesus evidently did not apply this term to himself at all, for Jesus nowhere indicates that he is to set up a militaristic kingdom.

Term Lord

The classical Greek term from which "Lord" is translated denotes a person who has control or authority. And in the Greek Old Testament we find a score of Hebrew words being translated from it, varying in form from owners of property to Jehovah himself.

"Lord" does not identify Jesus with God, rather it has more the meaning of master or rabbi. It was not until the apostolic age that the term was given a higher meaning, ascribing to Jesus theocratic authority.

Term Christ.

This term has the meaning of one who has been anointed with oil, or officially consecrated.to some important task.

Frequently it is used in reference to the high priest, or the king, in fact, even Cyrus, the king of Persia, is referred to by this Hebrew term. (1)

Then it came to be used as the title of the expected King and Deliverer, the Messiah. (2)

The term "Christ" then was used in pre-Christian times by the Jews to designate the expected, but as yet unidentified Messiah. The New Testament writers make no explanation concerning the use of the term. They apparently assume that it will be understood by the readers. But from the use of this term in the New Testament it indicates that it meant "divinely appointed Saviour or Deliverer." (3)

Because the term "Christ" is used in the title of this paper, perhaps an explanation of its use would be expected. The Greek word "Christos" means: One who has been anointed with oil, or formally and officially consecrated to some important task.

To the writer of this paper the term Christ means one set apart and consecrated to an important task. Furthermore, it means one dedicated to a special task. If anyone in the world ever dedicated his life to a cause or a task Jesus did. When he was baptised he definitely dedicated his life to the cause of the Kingdom and may it be added, he was formally consecrated for that cause by being baptised. Later in his life we may apply the term Messiah to Jesus. But this term is not

(1) E. D. Burton, Study of the Teachings of Jesus, p. 230
(2) Enoch 48:10, Psalm of Solomon, 17:36
(3) E. D. Burton, Study of the Teachings of Jesus, p. 231

used in the popular Jewish idea of Messiah. It is used in the sense that if Jesus was a Messiah at all, it was only as a spiritual Messiah.

Therefore, the term "Christ" as used by the writer of this paper refers to Jesus as one who dedicated his life to a cause, and includes the idea of Jesus as a Messiah, but a Messiah only in the sense that he was a spiritual Messiah.

Term "Son of Man

The Old Testament does not use the term "Son of Man" as referring to a particular person. Nor do we find this term used as a Messianic designation, except "In the Similitudes of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch, which are commonly assigned to the first half of the first century B.C., the phrase 'the Son of Man' is used as a designation of the Messiah. In no other Jewish work of the pre-Christian or New Testament period is the term so used.

"In the New Testament the phrase occurs with the article eighty-one or eighty-two times, only one of these instances being outside the gospels, Acts 7:56. In all the instances except this the term is, prima facie at least, a self-designation of Jesus; in John 12:34 the phrase is represented as a quotation of Jesus' language. Without the article it occurs in John 5:27; Hebrews 2:6; Revelations 1:13; 14:14. In all these instances, with the possible exception of John 5:27, the phrase bears its Old Testament sense, 'a man'. The phrase does not appear in Paul or the general epistles either with the article or without it -- a fact which strongly suggests

the term was not a common Christian designation of the Messiah." (1)

This title "son of man" is the term which Jesus chose to apply to himself.

This term was used or can be interpreted as meaning, a reference to mankind, a son of a man, or it could be used as a personal reference where "I" could be used, as in Mark 10:23.

There is no doubt that the term "son of man" was used to some extent at the time of Jesus' life but not used as definitely referring to the Messiah, in an exclusive sense.

Concerning these terms which we have briefly viewed, we can conclude but this:

1. Son of God cannot be applied to Jesus in the New Testament sense, as being sent from Heaven. Yet we can truly say that Jesus was the Son of God in that he tried to live as a child of God and inasmuch as he accepted God as his father.

2. Son of David cannot be applied to Jesus. Jesus did not recognize himself as such.

3. Lord. This term did not identify Jesus with God. It may be used in referring to Jesus as master.

4. Christ. This cannot be used as referring to Christ as the Divinely Appointed, popular Jewish conceived Messiah. But it can most certainly be used as denoting Jesus as dedicated for a special task and as being the Spiritual Messiah.

5. Son of Man. This is the term that Jesus applies to himself.

(1) E. D. Burton, Study of the Teachings of Jesus, p. 217

Chapter VI

What was the Great Commission that Jesus Accepted in the Beginning?

Depending upon what theory we wish to uphold concerning the life work of Jesus, we could say that he set out on one of several missions. However, when we come to a final analysis of them, we find that there is one great mission -- the revealing of the love and knowledge of God to mankind. Yet at times this mission appears to be carried out by different methods and thereby we are mistaking methods for commissions. Nevertheless, let us look at some of the possible missions of Jesus.

A. To proclaim his Messiahship?

Did Jesus from the very beginning do what he did to proclaim his Messiahship? No. Jesus did not have that object in mind at all. He suppressed the very thought of it becoming foremost. No doubt there was some temptation to proclaim himself the Messiah, else why the conflict concerning the casting of himself from the temple steeple? Yet it does not seem that this temptation arose within himself. There was perhaps a reason why this temptation should arise -- it was that the people sought a messiah and if Jesus should proclaim himself the messiah, his opportunity for aiding his nation and people would be greater.

The upholding of the supernatural birth argues for an admission from the beginning of the proclamation of his Messiahship. But a discussion of his supernatural birth has already been presented. Then the statement of Jesus in the temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"(1) might be argued by some to indicate that Jesus

(1) Luke 2:49

began even so young with a recognition of his messiahship and continued to reveal it.

"Jesus believed he was the Messiah," says Holtzman, "and he must announce it else why would people think of a carpenter as a Messiah?"(1)

Then we might go through the entire life of Jesus and find event after even t that might be considered as a means of announcing or proclaiming his messiahship. For instance, his baptism -- if we wish to take literally the story of the baptism, the argument is very strong.

In his ministry we find Jesus saying, "But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed and go into thine house."(2)

The incident of Peter's confession, the miracles, the cross, and the resurrection, contain enough material pertaining to Jesus' relationship to the Messiah to arouse some argument concerning the question, Did Jesus set out to proclaim his Messiahship?

Even the fact that Jesus did use the title "son of man", gave no countenance to the hopes of the people concerning the Messiahship and yet it did not deny his unique mission. And if we hold the incidents referred to down to facts never do we find Jesus taking advantage of any situation to proclaim his messiahship -- it was the last thing in the world he wished

(1) O. Holtzman, The Life of Jesus, p. 138
(2) Luke 5:24

to do. He did not set out with the idea in mind to proclaim his Messiahship.

B. To minister to the human needs and demands.

This type of work likewise was an appeal to Jesus. His first temptation concerning the making of stones into loaves indicates this. With all the suffering, depression, and sickness that was prevalent at the time of Jesus, the temptation must have been very strong to enter the work of satisfying physical needs. But yet there was other work to be done. The proof cannot be found in the New Testament that Jesus entered the work of caring for the physical wants alone. He did take the physical needs into consideration, but Jesus did not make this his primary issue.

C. To be a social reformer.

"In the cause of thoroughgoing ethical and social reconstruction of society, men have dragged Jesus along with them. They have read back into his teachings ideas quite foreign to his time and to his own thought forms. Such excessive zeal is as mistaken as any other form of dishonesty."(1)

We will never get a clear insight into Jesus' teachings "if we do not realize that he was not primarily a social reformer or a social legislator. His teaching assuredly was to issue in a new society, but his primary purpose was not to make social changes. It was to make new men. His interest was focused on the making of a man whose social mind would be

(1) H. Luccock, Jesus and the American Mind, p. 40

controlled by good will. But while he was not primarily a social reformer, it is clear that the purpose of God, as Jesus interpreted it, included all aspects of life. His ideal for man was a society in which men acknowledged their sonship to God and sought the common good of men as their brothers." (1)

D. To reveal God to Mankind.

This seems to be the big issue in the life of Jesus. He recognized the social and physical needs, but he realized that the greatest work was not in remaking part of man, but rather in remaking the whole of man. Jesus grew into the sonship of God. In the beginning all men are sons of God, yet all men do not realize it nor act as if they were. Jesus grew into this realization and responded to his Father quicker than others do.

"While in others a new birth, a regeneration, is necessary in order that the true attitude may be produced, in him, Jesus, this is natural. He assumed it from the first. This is what constitutes his originality and consequently his unique vocation. 'I and the Father are one.' Thus we may say that the great work of Jesus, the mission of his life, his constant and supreme effort was to help men to discover the secret of life, by revealing to them the mystical attitude of his own which at every moment brought him face to face through the Father with life." (2)

(1) H. Luccock, Jesus and the American Mind, p. 41
(2) G. Berguer, Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus, p. 245

"Jesus did not, as we do, sacrifice a part of his psychic self to another part that ought to live; he sacrificed the whole self, the whole human personality, to the life of Humanity which he felt within him. This was the sublime in sacrifice; it was the individual experience transcending its limits and rising to the height of the collective human experience. Thus one might almost say that Humanity was the question with Jesus, that there was no question of individuality at all; it was the person consecrated to the services of Humanity, the son of man becoming man par excellence because he was more than the son of man, because he was the son of God." (1)

That is, because he did realize the relationship of father and son with God, Jesus was able to be a greater man. It was growth with conflict that developed his realization. But his growth and struggle did not stop here. It was necessary to continue growing if he was to continue to be God's son. In other words, the higher one climbs the greater his vision becomes, and the greater his vision is the more he sees and realizes he has just begun to live, therefore he must keep climbing. In this sense Jesus grew into the sonship of God.

A young man struggles to win a place in the life of a young woman and finally he gives her an engagement ring and pledges her his love. He loves her with all his

(1) G. Berguer, Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus, p. 253

heart, yet at the wedding day he will acknowledge he has more love for her. His love is growing because they two are gradually becoming one and acting and reacting to situations similarly. Their love for each other will be revealed in their love for their children. The greater their love, the greater are their responsibilities and therefore life is more difficult and yet more joyous in the struggle.

Thus Jesus and God grew to be one. Jesus came to know God more intimately, and so he reflected more of the spirit and love of God. Yet the more Jesus knew God and of God's love the more responsible Jesus was in revealing it to mankind. He could not give up God's love because it was too great, therefore he was willing to suffer. Thus he was truly man, yet greater than the son of man, for he was God's son.

Chapter VII

Was Jesus the Prophesied Messiah?

What attitude did Jesus take to the Messianic ideas of the day? "Of one thing, no doubt, he was convinced from the outset, nsmely, that the kingdom of God was at hand. It was this teaching of John the Baptist that inspired him to enter upon his public ministry, having hitherto lived and taught more or less privately.....When he began to teach broadcast, this was his message: 'The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hsnd: repent ye, and believe the good tidings.' Nor did his message fail of a hearing. For many reasons he drew multitudes. His own personality as well as the temper of his times, gained him hearers."(1)

Before long he was called upon to answer two important questions. First, what was to be the nature of this Kingdom that he was proclaiming to be near at hand? And secondly, what was his personal relationship to this Kingdom? What place did he have in it? Because of the questioning of the people, Jesus felt himself called upon to answer, so he had to decide, not only for himself, but for others. It was the necessity of decision on these questions that created a crisis in the life of Jesus.

"He began to wonder - to reason - to ask others. What did the Messiah mean? What did the Kingdom mesn? And what was he himself with respect to it? 'Who do men say that I am? Who say ye that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'Thou art

(1) H. G. Enelow, The Jewish View of Jesus, 127

the Messiah.' (Mark 8:27-30). We do not know whether that answer at first pleased Jesus or not, or whether the suggestion that he was the Messiah first came from his disciples, or whether he made it to them. Certain it is that he was reticent about it and asked his disciples at first to say nothing about it." (1)

When finally Jesus reached a decision it was true to the ruling thought of his life. It was spiritual. The Kingdom of God, he decided, was not political, it was not of this world: it was spiritual.

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo! here; or Lo! there! For behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." (2)

"No doubt it meant a great relief for Jesus to harmonize his inmost convictions with the Messianic passion of the age. But, on the other hand, it involved him in the most tragic misunderstanding of his career. If his other teachings were so often misunderstood -- at times even by his closest disciples -- how much more likely was this one to be misunderstood, touching as it did the most sensitive spot in the life of the age! The multitude that had been fired to believe that here at last was a true deliverer, the Messiah they had hoped for, turned away from him, disappointed, disillusioned, embittered. One of his own disciples turned against him -- betrayed him. On the other hand, the rulers, hearing that he had proclaimed himself Messiah,

(1) H. C. Enelow, The Jewish View of Jesus, p. 132
(2) Luke 17:20,21

and having had experience with other self-styled Messiahs, decided to hand him over to the Roman authorities, lest the whole people be charged with rebellion. They were not in a mood -- perhaps they had no taste -- for fine spiritual analysis. Thus, Jesus lost his life in the messianic maelstrom of his age." (1)

The statement that Enelow makes, "Hearing that he had proclaimed himself the Messiah", seems a little overdone, for where does Jesus proclaim himself out and out as the Messiah, unless it be in the Fourth Gospel? And Wrede as quoted by Bundy says that the Fourth Gospel admits Jesus as the Messiah but then he would add "but that gospel is not historical." (2) He means most likely that Jesus 'having been proclaimed the Messiah' rather than Jesus 'proclaiming himself the Messiah.' If Jesus had wished to be recognized as the Messiah, it would not have been for the sake of being the Messiah but rather as a means of presenting himself to his people in such a way that they would give heed to his teachings.

But as yet we have not answered the question: "Was Jesus the prophesied Messiah?"

The Jewish nationalist could not separate religion from patriotism. A religious and a political issue went hand in hand for him. Therefore, it was natural that Jesus should be asked, "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar?" The Messianic hope, and issue, then, was as much political as religious. And even if Jesus had no claim to the Messiahship or the title "Christ", he as a Jew would have to adjust him-

(1) H. G. Enelow, The Jewish View of Jesus, p. 132
(2) W. E. Bundy, Our Recovery of Jesus, p. 231

self to the Messianic conception which was shared by his country-men and based on the teachings of the prophets.

According to Dr. Baur's view, "The Messianic idea had no vitality for Jesus. The prophet of Nazareth was a purely ethical teacher, who would gladly have ignored a hope with which at heart He had no sympathy, and which He knew to be a delusion. But being a Jew, he was obliged to recognize the national expectation, however distasteful to His own feelings, and speak as if He regarded it as important; nay, He was compelled reluctantly to let Himself be taken for the Messiah, as the indispensable condition of success on Jewish soil in an attempt to introduce a new universal religion."(1)

The whole thing in this view is the acknowledgement that there was much in the conventional Messianic idea with which Jesus did not agree. Bruce feels, however, that because Jesus did not agree entirely with the conventional Messianic belief does not indicate that he did not have any Messianic convictions. (2)

Jesus must have entered his public ministry with transformed ideas of the Messiah and of the Messianic Kingdom. Bruce goes even further to suggest that undoubtedly Jesus got his ideas of Messiahship from the ancient text rather than from the current ideas. Such characteristics as "a gentle, missionary, suffering Messiah gaining power by meekness, by His wisdom, giving light to the world, bearing the sins and miseries of men by sympathy as a burden on his heart," (3) are gotten from the Old Testament.

(1) A. B. Bruce, The Kingdom of God, p. 148
(2) Ibid, p. 149
(3) Ibid, p. 150

Jesus seemed to hide his good deeds for he feared fame. Kindness, humbleness, humility, sympathy, pity and patience are written by all his acts. If Jesus was the Messiah at all, he was a Messiah of this type rather than a nationalistic one. He was "not the political Messiah of the zealots, whose one desire was national independence; not the Messiah of common expectation, who should flatter popular prejudices and make himself an idol of the Pharisees, himself a Pharisee, regarding it as his vocation to deliver Israel from Pagan impurity; not even the austere Messiah of the Baptist, who was to separate the good from the evil by a process of judicial severity, andso usher in a Kingdom of righteousness. The Messiah devoutly to be longed for, and cordially to be welcomed when he came, in his view, was one who should conquer by the might of love and truth; who should meet the deepest wants of man, not merely gratify the wishes of Jews, and prove a light and a saviour to the whole world; who should be conspicuous by patience and hopefulness rather than by inexorable sternness,-- a humane, universal, spiritual Messiah, answering to a divine Kingdom of character,-- the desire of all nations, the fulfilment of humanity's deepest longings, therefore not destined to be superseded, but to remain an Eternal Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever."(1)

Jesus was not the prophesied Messiah according to the expectations of his day. If we take the point of view that the Old Testament prophesied a Messiah who would suffer for his people, be kind, patient, and so forth, we can say he was the

(1) A. B. Bruce, The Kingdom of God, p. 152

prophesied Messiah, but as long as we associate Jesus with a popular political type of Messiah, Jesus was not such a prophesied Messiah. There is no doubt but that Jesus had a nationalistic view point -- that is, he loved his nation and wanted to see it prosper -- but he realized that only a spiritual rebirth would remake his nation. Jesus told his disciples to go first to the lost sheep of Israel. Yet we must not think of Jesus as being nationalistic to the point of excluding other people. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations" (1) did not mean to go only to the Jews. Jesus would not have the place he has today in the lives of people if he had only had a narrow nationalistic vision.

From all apparent New Testament attitudes Jesus was not the prophesied Messiah. The Jews were looking and longing for an altogether different type of Messiah than Jesus proved to be. "Jesus in the first three gospels never claims to be the Messiah, nor does he give himself out as such; in fact, it is nowhere perfectly clear that he regarded himself as the Messiah at all." (2) When Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?", they replied saying, "John the Baptist, and others Elijah, but others, one of the prophets." (3) Even when Jesus rode into Jerusalem near the close of his life people asked "Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee." (4)

These remarks certainly prove that the people of his time did not recognize him as the prophesied Messiah.

(1) Matthew 28:19
(2) W. E. Bundy, Our Recovery of Jesus, p. 247
(3) Mark 8:27-28
(4) Matthew 21:11-12

If Jesus had been the popularly prophesied Messiah, he not likely would have been crucified, or at least would not have been crucified by his own countrymen. Jesus was a higher type of Messiah than the people looked for, and because their eyes were blinded by material things and nationalism, they beheld him not.

Chapter VIII

When did Jesus Reveal His Messiahship?

If the fact has not been stated outright, it at least has been inferred, that Jesus' goal was not to proclaim his Messiahship. Further, it has been stated that Jesus was not the traditional prophesied Messiah. Immediately, the question arises, Was he a Messiah at all? Yes, Jesus was the Messiah, the type of a Messiah as described by Bruce in the preceding chapter -- a spiritual Messiah. If Jesus was the Messiah, then when did he reveal the fact to mankind?

When Jesus actually admitted or even truly realized and revealed his Messiahship is not agreed upon. Therefore, a few of the conclusions as to when Jesus realized his Messiahship will be briefly presented.

Holtzman believes that the consciousness of the Messiahship of Jesus was a gradual growth, but "even before his public ministry Jesus knew through the revelation of his Messiahship that a special protection on the part of God was assured to him." (1)

There is no doubt that the consciousness of Messiahship was a gradual growth. And, also, Jesus may have felt from his early life that he had a special protection from God. Yet it does not seem probable that that was due primarily to the fact that he thought himself the Messiah. If was due, if he had that feeling, and no doubt he did, to the fact that Jesus lived so close to God. His prayer life indicates that he felt God very close. Bundy even takes the time to reveal the many times that

(1) O. Holtzman, The Life of Jesus, p. 149

Jesus stopped to pray (1) and it is interesting to note that especially before every great decision Jesus prayed ardently. "Jesus in hours of stress and strain, when confronted with specially pressing problems, sought out solitude and seclusion, there to be alone with his God, to seek His will and to strive to perform it." (2)

His disciples and the other people recognized that "he spoke as one having authority." But this authority was not bestowed upon him -- it was rather achieved. His own personal convictions gave to him authority.

David Smith feels that Jesus realized his Messianic call when he was in the temple, only twelve years old. (3)

"Not until our Lord assented to the interrogation of the high priest did He Himself publicly and categorically affirm His own Messiahship." (4)

Wrede follows by stating that the resurrection was really the time of the earliest conception of his messiahship, except that by his disciples, which Jesus suppressed. (5)

If it was due to the spectacular elements in the resurrection that his messiahship was recognized, then why did not Jesus let himself do something spectacular during his earthly life. The demoniacs looked to him as "the Holy one of God." (6) The people looked on in amazement questioning,

(1) W. E. Bundy, Our Recovery of Jesus, p. 298-319
(2) Ibid, p. 298
(3) D. Smith, Days of His Flesh, p. 23
(4) W. Sanday, The Life of Christ in Recent Research, p. 120
(5) Ibid, p. 214
(6) Mark 1:24 Luke 4:34

"What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? With what authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits,and they do obey him." (1) Likewise when Jesus performed miracles, he had the opportunity to emphasize the spectacular. If it was only because of the miraculous elements in the resurrection, that caused the people to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, then it seems that he had missed many an opportunity before to display the spectacular so had to play his last card that they might believe he was the Messiah.

Bernhard Weiss believes practically the same as Höltzman that the Messianic conception of Jesus was a gradual growth, but upon his entrance into the ministry he had a messianic conception of his work. (2)

There is no doubt but that Jesus in some ways accepted somewhat the prevailing messianic ideas, but if he did, he bore them in silence as a heavy burden, for they were not his convictions. Jesus' own conception of whether or not he was the Messiah, we can never absolutely know. But one thing is certain, and that is that Jesus attempted to save his people for God, and to do it by love rather than by force. He suffered heartache and discouragement, he was misunderstood, and finally was put to death. This very fact that he was willing to sacrifice all, even life, for his cause was a proof of his loyalty to God and to his fellow men. His Messiahship was in the cross; in the cross he was crowned. For he continued

(1) Mark 1:27
(2) W. Sanday, The Life of Christ in Recent Research, p. 138

to the end, although he could have turned back. It was the centurion standing guard who first began to realize who Jesus was as he said, "Truly this is the Son of God." (1) By this the centurion could have meant nothing else than that Jesus had acted as no other man had acted. He had reflected God, and to truly reflect God, one must needs be God's son.

If the gospel stories had ended here, Jesus would still be the leader of men today. But the story of the resurrection does clinch the promises of Jesus pertaining to future life, and gives to mankind the hope and confidence that the spirit of Jesus lives and will walk with man. Yet the story has its problems also.

To go into a real discussion of the resurrection would be impossible here as it would take much time and space. Furthermore, this is not the argument of this paper. But it does seem necessary to state briefly some of the outstanding considerations pertaining to the resurrection. Such theories have been stated:

1. Jesus fainted. Later he revived. But one question remains nevertheless -- What finally became of him or his body?

2. Joseph of Arimathea did not want a criminal in his tomb, so sent his servants to dispose of the body, and forgot to tell the disciples about it. If this be the situation, why did Joseph, in the first place, ask Pilate for the body of Jesus to place in his tomb?

(1) Mark 15:39

3. The body decomposed in one night. This is not very probable.

4. When Mary went to the grave she was in a confused, excited state, and when she saw the open grave, became more excited and mistook the gardener for an angel. (1)

In the fifteenth chapter of Corinthians Paul speaks of the resurrection, but he does not specify that it was a physical reaurrection. He speaks of Jesus appearing unto Cephas, to the twelve, to about five hundred, to James, to all of the Apostles, and last of all "he was seen of me also." (2)

Now Jesus' appearance unto Paul was while he was journeying to Damascus (3), and it most certainly was not a physical appearance else the others who were with Paul would have seen Jesus also. That was a spiritual vision to Paul. Christ appeared unto him in a spiritual way, and by that means gave to Paul a spiritual rebirth.

Paul was not the only one to whom the risen Christ appeared. (4) Concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus there was no thought on the part of the disciples of Jesus ever returning. To them the resurrection story meant that Jesus would return and walk with them in the spiritual life. They did not expect him to return and live with them in the physical life. "The greatest outstanding thing in the resurrection," according to Dr. Lowstuter, "is that Jesus who was lost to men is recovered to them in the resurrection. Jesus is accessible to all men who will receive him in the spiritual way."

(1) K. Lake as quoted in Dr. Lowstuter's Lectures
(2) 1 Corinthians, 15:8
(3) Acts 9:1-8
(4) Mark 16:9,10; Matthew 28;9; Mark 16:12; Luke 24:34; 24;36
Matthew 28:20 and others

When the disciples began to understand Jesus, his ideals, purpose and spirit, then they began to live. It was the beginning of a new day. Christ was not dead, but living among men.

The cross was the high mark in the life of Jesus -- for if ever he was the Messiah, he was truly the Messiah then. He was God's son. The resurrection was the high mark in the life of the disciples, and continues to be the high mark in the life of mankind when they know Jesus as the living Christ.

Chapter IX

The Goal of the Christ.

What was the goal of the Christ? It was, first of all, to save his nation. No doubt in his youth, as he heard of the oppression and saw the result of it, he was fired with enthusiasm to rise up like Judas Maccabeus of old, and throw off the yoke of foreign rule. Then moreover, there was the matter of adjusting conditions among his own people, for there were the rich, and the greedy tax collectors on the one hand, while on the other hand there were the poor and down-trodden. Did not the spirit of Amos arouse within him a zeal to bring God's condemnation upon the rich and selfish? Then, too, there were the religious zealots who thought their religion consisted entirely in sacrifice and obedience to an external and formal law. Again, did not the words of Amos ring in his mind, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts." (1)

The condition of his country and the pathetic need of his people forced Jesus to take part in a reconstruction process. However, if Jesus had not had foresight and ability, he certainly would never have taken any part at all. If he had not had an unusual innate ability, no doubt he would have been like many of the others, longing for something to happen but not

(1) Amos 5:21,22

knowing what to do. Because Jesus had a sincere ambition he did not take advantage of his abilities and lead the people into more difficulties.

Jesus undoubtedly considered accepting the hoped for messianic role -- but in the long run he would have gained nothing for his people. Yet something must be done. Should it be to feed the hungry, comfort the sorrowing, lift up the needy -- that was sincerely needed, but after much consideration and deliberation Jesus came to the conclusion that that was not enough. He must remake the whole of man, and the primary need in the remaking of man was to develop the spiritual life. Thus in the midst of so many possibibities Jesus saw one avenue -- and that was rebuilding the inner life of mankind.

Thus Jesus set out alone, yet not alone. His early training had taught him of the knowledge and assurance of God. It was mankind whom Jesus was serving, yet it was God. The courage, conviction, and authoritative tone of his message revealed his closeness to God. Jesus prayed often -- and his prayers were not primarily asking God to do this or that for himself, but rather in his prayers he strove to know the will of his Father and then to be able to follow out that will in his every-day life. Because of his frequent and intimate communion with and knowledge of God he could truly say, "My Father and I are one."

The baptism of Jesus was a definite pledge to work for the Kingdom. This Kingdom, Jesus later said, is not an

external Kingdom, it is a condition within one. His temptation period was a mental and moral struggle as to how he was going to be best able to carry out what he thought was the will of God. There is nothing to indicate definitely that Jesus expected at the time of his wilderness experience that he would die on the cross. He realized, however, that he should meet opposition.

The entire life of Jesus was a struggle. Likewise the entire life of Jesus was a growth. Besides growing physically, mentally, morally, and socially, Jesus was growing into the sonship of God. His daily life with its perplexities drove him to rely more and more upon God. Jesus' illustrations of God's fatherly love may have come, and without a doubt did come, from Jesus' personal associations with God.

Jesus would not equivocate. He was firm in his beliefs because he was thoroughly convinced. Toward the latter part of his ministry Jesus realized a possibility of physical suffering -- possibly death. Then the temptation to turn back came to him. Peter was no encouragement to Jesus in this hour of temptation when he rebuked Jesus for even thinking such a thing. (1) It was difficult enough for Jesus without having his friends hold him back in his purpose.

Shortly following this we have the Transfiguration story. In the light of what has been said, the happenings on the mountain can be best understood from the interpretation of Jesus' mind. He realized now that to go on meant death -- should he stop or should he continue? As he had done many times

(1) Mark 8:32,33

before, he talked over his problem with God. He meditated, and drew upon the lives of the men of the past. Courage and strength was brought to him as he thought of Moses and Elias. His face would be transfigured, for he had triumphed. He certainly could be called "my beloved son." (1)

Continuing, he faced the worst and triumphed, for he remained true.

Jesus referred to himself as the "son of man" but he grew to be truly a "son of God". God could rely upon Jesus as His son, for a son is expected to act like and to carry out the wishes of his father.

If we want to state the goal of Jesus in his own terms we could very easily sum it up in "For the Son of Man is come to seek that which was lost." (2) This idea is illustrated in several of the parables of Jesus. (3) And there was but one way to restore his country and to save his people and that was by revealing God to them.

Jesus' goal then was to reveal to mankind the love and Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of mankind. His method was that of a teacher. Teaching quite often takes the longer method, but it is the only enduring method. In the life of Jesus, especially on the cross, we discover the Christ, the spiritual Messiah.

We perceive in Jesus the holy unity to which the human spirit, permeated by the spirit of God, can and therefore must

(1) Mark 9:7
(2) Luke 19:10
(3) Luke 7:36-50; 10:30-37; 19:1-10

attain. It is given us to see in Jesus the sublime purity into which the human spirit can be transfigured by God's spirit. And Jesus also makes us to know how man can become, and should become, and does ever will to become, God, even as God ever wills to become man." (1)

(1) F. Rittelmeyer, Behold the Man, p. 53

Summary.

The environment in which a man lives has much to do with the shaping of his life. Nevertheless, even though the environment offers stimulus, a person must have a native ability, else all the stimuli in the world would be valueless. Into a world seething with social, political, and religious unrest, one Jesus was born. In tne little town of Nazareth, which was surrounded by Jewish historical memories, this lad grew into manhood, with his mother, brothers and sisters. The father died when Jesus was somewhere in his early teens, and since Jesus was the oldest naturally he had to assume a great part of the responsibility. From all that can be learned Jesus was taught thoroughly the "Law and the Prophets", and "grew in favor with God and man."

For years the Jews had beencrushed by foreign rule and oppression. Uprisings and rebellions had proved to be more disastrous. They thought there was but one means for them to secure freedom, and that was by the intervention of God. (They were forgetting that God works through man.) So they looked forward to a deliverer, a Messiah who had been prophesied of old. Their interpretation of the Messiah was that of a mighty ruler, the son of David, who would come and establish a political kingdom in Palestine with Jerusalem as its center.

This man Jesus was, it appears, because of his unusual ability, mistaken for the Messiah the Jews looked for.

But Jesus himself did not say that he was the prophesied Messiah, the one the Jews expected. Authorities have indicated that Jesus was of supernatural birth and so was the Messiah. But Jesus did not say anything at all about his birth. The fact that when he was twelve years old he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" is stated as Jesus realizing his mission as Messiah. This seems more like a reading into rather than a conclusion from what was said.

Then for about eighteen years he is not heard of. At the end of this period he appears at the River Jordan to listen to John the Baptist. Because of the appeal of John's preaching, Jesus is baptised. This is a definite step by Jesus in pledging himself to support and work for the Kingdom. Just how he should go about his work is decided in his mental struggles known of as the Temptations. As a result of his struggles he determines to do, act, and speak as God would want him to. So Jesus set out on a teaching mission, teaching that the Kingdom of God is, rather than a militaristic Kingdom, a spiritual Kingdom which is to be established within one's self. Of the many names that have been applied to Jesus, such as, "Son of God", "Son of David", "Messiah", "Lord", and "Christ", Jesus refers to himself as the "son of man."

When his disciple Peter answered Jesus' question by saying, "Thou art the Christ", Jesus rebuked him and asked that he tell no man what he had said. Now Jesus sees defin-

itely that trouble lies ahead, and he is disturbed. At one time he took three of his disciples with him and went to the mountain top to pray. While the disciples slept, he prayed, and came down from the mountain top a transfigured man -- for he had been victorious over himself.

Jesus did not strive to be a social reformer or a satisfier of human needs. His mission included these, but more too. His aim was to reawaken the spiritual life of man and to remake mankind.

In the Jewish use of the term Messiah, Jesus was not the Messiah, but he later proved to be the Messiah in a far greater sense than the Jews of his day expected. His Messiahship was a gradual growth. Jesus grew into a God-consciousness until truly he could say, "The Father and I are one." From the "son of man" Jesus grew into the "sonship of God." His Messiahship was proved in the cross, and in the cross he was crowned. Jesus' goal was to establish the relationship of God to man as Father and son, and the spirit of brotherhood among mankind. His aim was to save his people, and he realized that the establishment of a political kingdom would never save them. A greater Kingdom was needed than that. The only Kingdom that could bring peace and good will to the world was the Kingdom of love and good will, and this was the Kingdom he tried to establish with God as the Great Father of all.

The conditions of his age urged him on and his unique character made him capable of leading.

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